2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Main Committee III

Summary record of the 4th meeting*
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 13 May 2010, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Nakane ..... (Japan)

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* No summary record was issued for the 3rd meeting.

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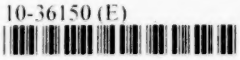

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

General exchange of views

1. **Ms. Trojanowska** (Poland) said that improvements in nuclear safety and security standards at international and national levels should be seen in the context of economic and technological development; they had led to a resurgence of global interest in nuclear power. Poland, for its part, had decided in 2009 to launch its own nuclear power programme. That decision had been dictated largely by the desire to achieve environment-friendly energy security at a reasonable cost, subject to appropriate regulations.

2. The proposal to start up Poland's first nuclear power reactor by 2020 had been a response to the country's obligation to meet international targets set by the European Union's climate and energy package and was based on the need for long-term security of electricity supply, the maintenance of acceptable prices for energy, reduced emission of pollutants and the increased importance attached to renewable energy sources.

3. The construction of nuclear power plants was a great challenge for Poland. The required preparation would entail developing and costing a nuclear power programme, determining its optimal scope in the foreseeable future and setting out a schedule of activities for the purposes of both administration and investment. Final approval of that programme lay with the Council of Ministers on the basis of extensive consultation and public debate. In that context, an operating model for the nuclear power sector had recently been developed, covering the complete construction cycle, the safe, secure and efficient operation of nuclear plant, decommissioning, including spent fuel and radioactive waste management, and the regulation of nuclear safety and radiological protection. The new regulations should set out the rights and responsibilities of all institutions and organizations fully or partially involved in the nuclear power programme and ensure their effective cooperation. A package of new laws was being prepared that would be governed by the principles of separation of the functions of regulation from those of promotion and coordination; transparency; and safety at every stage. All the preparatory work for Poland's nuclear power programme was being conducted in full observance of international law, European Union regulations and the relevant guidelines and recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including all the international legal instruments developed under the Agency's auspices. Poland attached the utmost importance to a high level of nuclear safety worldwide.

4. Nuclear power development in Poland required the assistance of international organizations possessing the necessary expertise and experience, such as IAEA and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and support from other important initiatives like the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. Without such assistance, which would help to optimize the process and lower costs, the undertaking would be sure to founder. Subjects of cooperation should include personnel training, the issue of access to nuclear fuel and its secure supply, and spent fuel and radioactive waste management. Not only could Poland benefit from such cooperation; it could also provide it in many fields.

5. **Mr. Al-Sudairy** (Saudi Arabia) said that the balance between nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament on the one hand, and peaceful use of nuclear energy on the other, had made the Treaty the linchpin of the non-proliferation regime. The Treaty provided that all States parties were entitled to conduct research and exchange scientific information in order to develop the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, and that none of its provisions were to be interpreted as affecting States parties' rights in that regard. However, certain States parties to the Treaty had modified their export policy in order to restrict the transfer of knowledge and technology to developing States parties, in addition to imposing further obligations on the latter or asking them to surrender their rights under the Treaty. Moreover, the provision by certain exporting States of technical assistance on nuclear issues to non-States parties indicated the existence of double standards and was in contravention with the Treaty and decision 2 adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, which stipulated that new supply arrangements for the transfer of nuclear materials should require acceptance of the Agency's full-scope safeguards and internationally legally binding commitments not to acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

6. Saudi Arabia was fully committed to adhering to all international instruments to which it was a party, and it looked forward to cooperating with relevant

international agencies, chief among them IAEA. His country also emphasized the Agency's role in helping developing States parties to the Treaty to improve their scientific and technical capabilities in order to benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

7. Based on the foregoing, he stressed that States parties had the fundamental, inalienable right to possess and develop nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes, and that any attempt to reinterpret the provisions of the Treaty that granted that right was unacceptable. He also called on IAEA to halt its cooperation with Israel until such time as that country acceded to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and placed its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, as a precondition for strengthening the Treaty's universality, efficacy and credibility.

8. **Mr. Jeenbaev** (Kyrgyz Republic), speaking on behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, said that not enough attention had been given in the past to mitigating the environmental consequences of nuclear weapons programmes. As had been noted at the 2000 Review Conference, there had been cases of significant environmental damage from uranium mining and associated nuclear fuel cycle activities. The environmental problems thus caused to the Central Asian States by nuclear weapons production were often overlooked; for that reason, those countries attached great importance to the work of the current Conference.

9. In particular, the condition of the toxic radioactive uranium tailings left by the mining industry in the territories of the Central Asian States had not met safety standards at that time and had further deteriorated since then, as mining operations had been shut down or reoriented; in a number of cases the situation was almost catastrophic. The situation was aggravated by the fact that many burial sites of highly toxic uranium were located in active seismic regions, landslide-risk areas prone to floods and high groundwater zones and nearby river banks, which formed the foundation of the extended water basin of the Central Asian region. In the event of natural disaster or natural degradation of protective structures, the highly toxic substances from those tailings would be likely to seep into freshwater sources. As the waste could then spread quickly and freely across the region, it could lead to large-scale contamination of vast territories of neighbouring countries, thus affecting tens of millions of people. The resulting environmental catastrophe would be not only regional but global in scale. Effective efforts were therefore needed at all levels to prevent further contamination.

10. In April 2009, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic had met in Bishkek with representatives of the United Nations Development Programme and the Eurasian Economic Community to discuss practical measures to address the uranium tailings problem and make concrete proposals to the High-level International Forum on Uranium Tailings held in Geneva in June 2009. He reiterated the appeal of the 1995 and 2000 Conferences to all Governments and international organizations possessing expertise in the clean-up and disposal of radioactive contaminants to consider giving appropriate assistance for radiological assessment and remedial purposes in the affected area.

The discussion covered in the summary recorded ended at 3.40 p.m.